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# BLANCHING

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Here's what you need to know...

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## Some Vegetables Can Skip Blanching!

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There are some foods that seem to freeze very well without blanching.

- **Tomatoes** can be frozen raw, either cut-up or whole. The texture of thawed tomatoes will be soft, but they can still be used for cooking.
- Freeze chopped **onions** in ½ cup portions. Like tomatoes, frozen onions are best in cooked dishes.
- Freeze **pepper** slices in bags so that you can easily grab what you need, when you need it.

Time is a critical component here. The longer an unblanched food is kept in the freezer, the lower its quality will be. Unblanched items should be used within 6 to 8 months of freezing.

## What is Blanching?

Blanching is the process of quickly heating fresh vegetables in boiling water or steam. This process is recommended for almost all vegetables when you're going to stash them in the freezer because it helps preserve their color and texture.

The amount of time that you need in order to heat a vegetable depends on the type of vegetable, its shape, and its size. Visit the homepage for the National Center for Home Food Preservation at <http://nchfp.uga.edu> to find a complete list of recommended blanching times. A quick dip in boiling water or steam is followed by an immediate ice bath, which stops the cooking process. That's blanching in a nutshell.

